



MEMORIAL STADIUM
&
MOUNTAINSIDE PARK
RENOVATION

M A S T E R P L A N

JANUARY 2004



Prepared By:

City of Asheville
Asheville Parks and Recreation

Memorial Stadium & Mountainside Park Renovation

Master Plan

City of Asheville
Asheville Parks and Recreation

Site Analysis

Memorial Stadium and the adjacent Mountainside Park are located along the west face of Beaucatcher Mountain on land that was purchased by the City of Asheville in 1923 and 1927 respectively. John Nolen, one of the preeminent landscape architects of the early 20th century, indicated in his 1922 Asheville City Plan that the land was best suited for municipal park development. The City has land holdings continuing up Beaucatcher Mountain that create the possibility for a series of parks and greenways to be constructed, thus fully implementing the original Nolen concept.

The large level area where Memorial Stadium exists today was created by cutting into the slope of the mountain. 48,000 cubic yards of soil and rock were removed to create the stadium area and adjacent park. Construction of the original stadium was completed in 1927 and was dedicated before a crowd of 6,000 citizens to the 63 veterans lost in World War I.

In 1949, extensive upgrades were completed to the stadium and park. A new 3,600 capacity seating area was constructed to create one of the most modern facilities in the Carolinas. A new brick pedestrian entrance arch was also constructed and dedicated to the war dead of Buncombe County.

The contiguous land holdings by the City in this area totals 24.3 acres. 9.56 acres within this property has been developed into Memorial Stadium and Mountainside Park. This area will be referred to as the “project area” throughout this report. The remainder of the City’s land (14.74 acres) is undisturbed, natural, wooded hillside.

The project area is bound by the Mountainside residential neighborhood to the north, city-owned wooded hillside to the east and south, and the Oakhurst neighborhood, McCormick baseball field and the City’s Purchasing Department warehouse to the west.

Within the project area, the vegetation is limited to mowed turf grass, an evergreen screen planting of White Pine, and a few newly planted Red Maples. With this limited habitat, wildlife finds a much more hospitable environment in the adjacent woodlands outside the project area.

Stormwater is removed from the site by an extensive drainage system associated with the sports field. Surface water is removed from the project area through yard inlets. Surface drainage from the adjacent hillside is piped underground before entering the park.

Existing structures and features within the project area include:

- Natural turf sports field
- Multi-use grassed area for practice and pick up games

- Picnic pavilion
- ¼ mile asphalt track
- Stadium seating (approximately 3,000 people)
- 1,060 SF public restroom
- 285 SF concessions structure
- 200 SF pressbox
- Historic brick entry arch
- Associated asphalt paving

Primary public access (pedestrian and vehicular) to the project area is from the west on Biltmore Avenue and Buchanan Avenue. Buchanan Avenue leads to the existing public parking. Additional pedestrian access is available off Hunthill Place on the north side of the park.

Recreation Needs

Parks and Recreation Survey

Asheville Parks and Recreation has always relied heavily on public input to help shape the planning and services offered by the department. A survey is conducted every five years to measure community feelings towards the Parks and Recreation Department. In October 2003, The City of Asheville retained Market Insight, a marketing research company, to prepare a Parks and Recreation Study. The results of this study have recently been made available and used to shape the program for the Memorial Stadium project.

The research objectives for the study included:

- To gauge the perceived familiarity with the recreational facilities and services.
- To obtain perceptions of the facilities and services available.
- To measure the perceived importance of selected programs.
- To measure past participation and levels of satisfaction with selected facilities.
- To determine attitudes toward specific programs/ideas.

Survey respondents had to live within the city limits of Asheville and be the adult in their household who was the most involved in recreational activities. Phone numbers were generated through the use of a random digit dial sample purchased from Scientific Telephone Samples. The target was to complete 300 surveys. At the 95% level of confidence, a sample size of 300 allowed Market Insight to be confident that their findings were at least +/- 6 percentage points from the true mean of the universe being sampled. A total of 307 interviews were completed for the study.

Survey results indicated a strong desire for recreation facilities that include playgrounds, greenway trails, and multi-use recreational space. Of the 307 surveyed, the following responses indicated areas of need:

- 62% felt that there were not enough playgrounds in their area.
- 68% had a desire for more trails and greenways. 43% “strongly agreed” on a need for more greenways.
- 66% agreed there was a need for more sports activities.
- 57% stated they would support the development of more parks and recreational space.

- 73% agreed that they would use a large recreation complex with sports fields, playgrounds and walking trails.

The Memorial Stadium and Mountainside Park Renovation project will enable each of these top five elements to be implemented, along with additional requests made by groups other than those recently surveyed.

Neighborhood Meeting Results

The Oakhurst neighborhood is adjacent to the southwest edge of Memorial Stadium. Two residents of the Oakhurst Neighborhood Association serve on the Memorial Stadium Action Committee. This neighborhood representation has given City staff an opportunity to hear directly from the neighborhood about recreation elements they would like to see and concerns they have with the adjacent facility. Items expressed by the neighborhood include:

- A desire for a playground
- Request for a basketball court
- Concerns regarding parking and traffic and how they will impact the neighborhood
- Desire for better pedestrian access

The comments received from the recently obtained survey and neighborhood meetings are being used by the City of Asheville to plan the renovation of Memorial Stadium and Mountainside Park. City staff found the specific requests in line with recreation trends in the Asheville area over the last two decades. Most importantly, the recent public input shows the Parks and Recreation Department's plans are directly on target with the needs of Asheville's ever-growing population.

2015 Comprehensive Master Plan

The Asheville Parks and Recreation Department's 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan was based upon a review of the entire community, an analysis of the existing park system and the identification of user needs. In this plan, City staff and representatives from throughout the community prioritized recommendations for capital improvement projects for the system. The renovation of Memorial Stadium and Mountainside Park was indicated as a recreation need and listed as a high priority project. Each of the specific recommendations have been incorporated into the current renovation plans. These recommendations included:

- Construct a new playground.
- Develop trail system in Mountainside Park.
- Provide site amenities such as benches, water fountains and enhanced picnic shelter.
- Improve entrance to Memorial Stadium.
- Construct a new field house/concessions building.
- Construct new fencing.
- Renovate grandstands and pressbox.
- Renovate existing track at Memorial Stadium and provide connection to Mountainside Park.
- Improve grassed area in Mountainside Park to increase playability.

The City of Asheville will always have a need for a vibrant and functional municipal stadium. As the only stadium owned by the city, necessity has driven much of its usage. The current facility lacks many things that are now basic elements of practical venues for cultural and athletic events. Asheville continues to enhance its ability to serve as a cultural and athletic events destination. The City accepts

the responsibility of providing a unique and attractive facility that not only hosts exciting events, but also meets the day-to-day recreation needs of its citizenry.

Program Description

Park Purpose

When the City of Asheville first built Memorial Stadium in 1927, the goal was to provide a regional facility where athletic and special events could take place. The stadium has served as the home of the Lee Edwards/Asheville High Cougars and the Stephens-Lee Bears. In addition, it has played host to countless events ranging from high school football games to concerts and cultural events. Current users of the facility include:

- Asheville Youth Sports
- Asheville Splash (Women's Soccer)
- Asheville Grizzlies (Men's Professional Minor League Football)
- WNC Bears (College Football)
- Asheville Assault (Women's Football)
- Asheville/Buncombe Youth Soccer
- Beginner Runners Club

The adjacent Mountainside Park provides a much needed practice area, along with a large, open grassed area with beautiful mountain scenery. This area once contained a playground that was used by children from the surrounding neighborhood. It was recently removed because of its age and non-compliance. A more suitable location for a new playground has been identified on the Site Plan.

Veteran's Memorial

An additional goal of the stadium facility is to serve as a memorial to Buncombe County's war veterans. The original vision of a true memorial was never completed. Today, the brick arch at the entrance is the only visual reminder of the proposed memorial. The City and concerned citizens would like to fulfill the original commitment that was made in the late 1920's. Plans for the events plaza include the installation of interpretive exhibits and memorials that honor veterans from wars of the 20th century. Mission Hospital has made a tentative commitment to transfer a monumental granite World War II memorial currently on their campus to the stadium's veteran's memorial area. This piece will be integrated with the other memorials planned to create a moving, interpretive exhibit that honorably remembers those who served their country.

Special Events

The Cultural Arts Division of Asheville Parks and Recreation hosts some of the largest events in the southeast. Having suitable venues for the wide variety of special events is important to providing a safe and enjoyable experience for the citizens of Asheville. Memorial Stadium renovation plans involved these City staff members so that events of all sizes can successfully take place there. Items such as ticket collection, security, service access for performers and vendors and spectator seating have been carefully reviewed.

Physical Needs

Although Memorial Stadium continues to be used and enjoyed by citizens, the facilities in general are in need of upgrading and enhancement to reflect the quality of events that occur there.

The site currently lacks an affective way of receiving visitors and collecting tickets. Plans call for the historic brick entry arch to be renovated so it can once again serve as the primary visitor entrance. Today, when visitors enter the park, they are greeted by an unattractive, underutilized asphalt paved area. The proposed project includes a new events plaza at the entrance. The existing asphalt paved area will be redesigned to include seating, landscaping and events space.

The public restrooms were rebuilt in 2003. Future plans include expanding the restroom building to contain a new field house, offices and concessions. A dining and events terrace is also planned that will provide a unique opportunity to recognize outstanding athletes that have performed at the stadium.

The existing stadium seating and press box on the east side are in need of renovation. The proposed project includes renovating the concrete seating and expanding the press box, making it an accommodating place to watch a home football game or view a special event.

Renovation plans scheduled for completion in Spring of 2004 include replacing the natural turf sports field with synthetic turf and replacing all of the stadium lighting. The synthetic turf will be larger than the existing grassed field, therefore the existing surrounding track will require renovation. As part of the proposed project, this ¼ mile track will be regraded and resurfaced. In addition, additional fitness trails are proposed to expand the recreational opportunities through the northern section of the park and to better connect the neighborhood with the planned facilities.

Future plans to improve access at the north side of the project include a new service access road from Hunthill Place and parking. On the western side, renovations are planned for the existing visitor parking area to improve efficiency, add landscaping and to enhance the overall appearance.

The City of Asheville currently owns all of the land necessary to complete the project, therefore no additional land will need to be acquired.

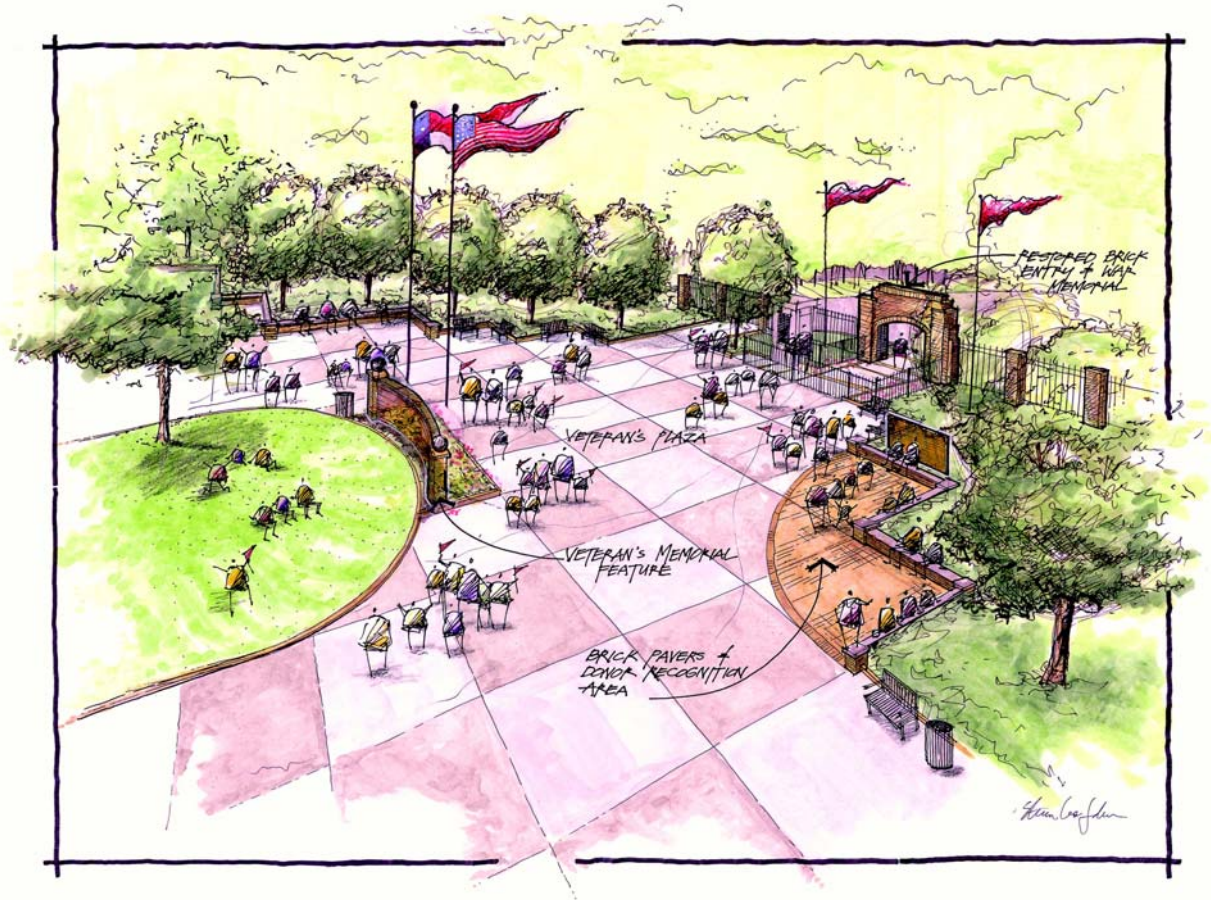
The existing site contains all of the necessary utility services; no future additions are planned.

Cost Estimate

Memorial Stadium and Mountainside Park Renovation		
Master Plan Cost Estimate		
<i>January 2004</i>		
Item	Cost	
Historic Brick Arch Restoration	\$4,000.00	
Brick Entrance Monument Sign	\$6,500.00	
Events Plaza (Paving, drainage and seatwalls)	\$90,000.00	
Ornamental Iron Railing and Brick Columns	\$35,000.00	
Ticket Stand	\$12,000.00	
Dining/Events Terrace and Athlete Recognition Area	\$6,500.00	
VIP Entertainment Area - Tensile Structure	\$20,000.00	
Pressbox Renovation	\$60,000.00	
Renovation of Existing Concrete Stadium Seating	\$140,000.00	
Existing track renovation	\$20,500.00	
New 8' Fitness Trail	\$20,000.00	
New Scoreboard	\$40,000.00	
ADA Compliance to existing metal bleachers	\$5,000.00	
Landscaping	\$15,000.00	
Existing parking lot renovation	\$5,500.00	
New Field house/office/ concessions building	\$500,000.00	
New 300'X165' Natural Turf Soccer Field	\$5,000.00	
Renovated Picnic Shelter/Pavilion and Picnic Tables	\$15,000.00	
New Playground	\$60,000.00	
New Basketball Court	\$25,000.00	
Total	\$1,085,000.00	
5% A&E	\$54,250.00	
5% Contingency	\$54,250.00	
Total Cost Estimate	\$1,193,500.00	

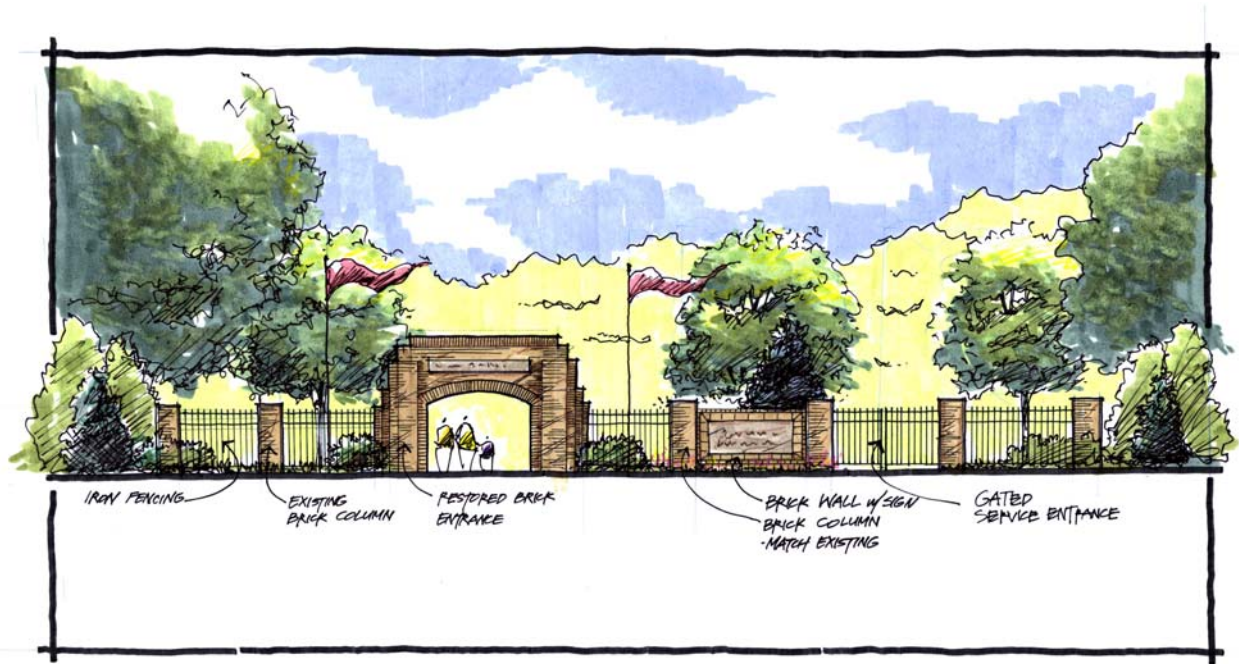
Site Plans and Illustrations

Page 9 contains the current site plan for Memorial Stadium and the adjacent Mountainside Park. All of the land necessary to implement the entire project is under City of Asheville ownership, therefore no land will be acquired as part of the project.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW

Proposed Events Plaza and Brick Entry Arch



ELEVATION

Proposed Historic Brick Entrance Arch and New Brick Columns with Fencing
As Seen From Visitor Parking

INSERT SITE PLAN HERE

*Currently Under Construction.
Please return to download this
document with the included siteplan
at a later date.*

Recommendations For Implementing the Plan

Implementation of the Master Plan is a priority of the City of Asheville and the Memorial Stadium Action Committee. The Action Committee has formed a Marketing and Fundraising Committee that has developed a full-scale marketing and fundraising campaign. This team of marketing and development professionals has a campaign in place to raise the funds needed to support the project. The effort is supported by a promotion campaign to raise funds through grants, sponsors, donations, in kind services and a “buy a brick” program. The promotion campaign will utilize media kits that will include a brochure, website and cable television spots.

At a recent City Council meeting, director of Asheville Parks and Recreation Irby Brinson stated it best when he said, “you strike while the iron is hot” as the reasoning behind the City’s commitment to implementing the Master Plan. There is an unprecedented initiative underway to successfully implement the plans and to do it in a way the citizens of Asheville will support it. City staff including landscape architects, engineers, marketing professionals, athletic staff and event planners, along with members of the Memorial Stadium Action Committee are part of the commitment to successfully implement the plan.

Public Involvement

In the fall of 2003, an effort was made to form a committee to help develop the program for the renovation project, and to raise the necessary funds. A group of users, neighbors, city staff, and a city councilor began the process and continue to meet each month. Members of the committee represent the following groups:

- Asheville City Council
- Asheville Youth Sports
- University of North Carolina – Asheville
- Buncombe County Veterans Council
- Asheville Tourists (baseball)
- Asheville Grizzlies (football)
- Mission-St. Joseph’s Hospital
- Asheville Splash (Soccer)
- Asheville Citizen-Times
- Oakhurst Neighborhood
- City of Asheville

The Asheville Parks and Recreation Speakers Bureau is already in place and will be used to inform groups about the project and opportunities to support it. Groups can easily schedule a guest speaker to present the master plan, highlighting each of the components of the project.